41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Alice Wine

I DON'T HAVE ONE DAY HOME

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●512 That's what I'm doing now—working in a kitchen. I get up around five o'clock now, get on my clothes, wash my face and wash up, and I'll go to the back yard and feed chicken. From that I come back and clean up my house, and get out in the road and catch a ride and go to work. And I get to work I take off my coat, my hats, put on a apron and a hat, and go upstairs and get towels, and I wash those towels and put 'em on the line and come back in, start to clean rooms, make up beds. Then after I done do all that, then I come in the kitchen, get something to eat, and home I go. Well sometime I be waiting from three to four hours catching a ride.

I come back do a little work home, and leave from there to go on down to the Progressive Club and stay down there until about nine-thirty, ten o'clock, when it's a clear day. But when they having these party we don't leave 'til two and three in the morning. Get up next morning, go back on the job again. I don't have one day home.

On Sunday, go to church. I get up in the morningtime, get wash up and go outside feed my chicken and water 'em, and take my feet and go on down to the club and open 'em up. I be there around 'bout 'til eleven-thirty, catch a ride and go to church.

Come from church, I'll come back home and get dinner, and from there I go to the society meeting. Then the same Sunday evening we go to the hall to prayer meeting.

I don't have but a couple hours in everything I'm doing. But when I leave from home and come to someone house, like I here with you all now, I'm resting. And when I go home there's no rest. Something there for to do. Ain't nobody pushing me 'round; I'm pushing myself. I see it to do and I got it to do, so I just do it.

I don't care how hard I work in the day, if I get my night rest, it just like I ain't work that day. I get up that next morning, I don't feel it. But what put me down if I don't get my night rest. I get tired and don't feel like going. If I go to bed 'round seven-thirty, eight o'clock, I get up the next morning I don't feel nothing.

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I CAN'T STAND TOO MUCH SITTING DOWN

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If I be sitting down and don't have nothing to do, I get stove up. I get painful and lazy. I can't stand too much sitting down. I likes to go. You must be always active. You miss and sit around all day, lay around all night, you're so painful 'til you can't hardly get up. But you be working all the time, get (826) your nerve together, get your vein together, then your muscle won't lock. Lot of people muscles lock by sitting down so much. No sit down for me. I likes to go.

I do any kind of job. I can plow, I can cut wood, I can sew, I can iron, I can scrub, I can do any kind of work in the field.

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My husband was a farmer. He was a market man. He run a big farm. We have plenty chickens, plenty cow—two cow, and hogs. He get up and go to the market 'round two-thirty in the morning. Then I get up, put my baby to sleep, and get out there. Sometime we have these Columbia truck come in all time of night. These white people come in and carry these cabbage and thing. I'd be out there with them around four o'clock in the morning. After they go I come back to the house to see about the baby, then get in the tub and wash. Do all my washing, do my house cleaning, cook meals, have meals on time, cut cabbage, crate 'em too, pack 'em too.

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I'm gone through a rough deal, but I thank God I'm still living. And I was doing those things in my nineteen and twenties. I'm fifty-nine now. So I'm not no baby!

873 For three generations a few young women on the island have attended college. At the time of the field work for the present study, at least four young women were attending colleges within and outside of the state. No young men were [874] orientated toward college, although one had attended technical school. Reasons for this sex difference will be discussed in the final chapter on social factors related to linguistic change.

•512 505 The rhythm of daily life on the island centers around the morning and evening boat trips to and from it. Before seven in the morning the noisy school boat has taken the first load of youngsters to meet the school bus at the mainland landing. Numerous small boats take workers to their cars at the landing or to meet rides on the highway some four miles further. During the day, the only men usually on the island 512 [732] are two who are blind and one or two who may be temporarily [734] sick. Several older women remain, some of whom care for [855] very young children entrusted to their care. Occasionally a younger woman with several pre-school children remains daily to care for them, but most women have mainland jobs. By 512 four o'clock the last boatload of children has returned from 505 mainland schools, and older boys prepare to meet returning parents in the family boats. By dark, most of the people have returned to their island homes and will spend the remainder of the evening on the island, except for special [574] occasions. Occasionally trips will be made to visit a sick

512 505 (574) neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men sometimes go across the water again for recreation in town. Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity 365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major 207 517 source of recreation for most families in the evenings. Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the afternoons and evenings. 206 Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat 504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be 505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 (438) (574) Weekends are reserved for the major social activities of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the 512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or 796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island. (493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and 491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

EXAMPLES OF DAILY ROUTINES OF SEA ISLANDERS

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Sister Carrie.--I can't help but turn around. Sister Carrie at 77 is up at 6:00 A.M. these days. During the school season all the children in the community stop at her gap to warm themselves by the fire and eat the pastries she prepares for them. A great grandmother, Sister Carrie has raised thirteen children. In reflecting on her fifty-one year marriage, she says "da women ta dae ain't wife lik en ma dae. Ca'n member but one dae I ain't had supper steamn hot an d table fer ma husbin." What Sister Carrie did not include was that during those years her day started at 4:30 A.M. By 5:30 A.M. breakfast had been prepared and she was on her way to the fields. She worked the field until 2:30 P.M. when she stopped and headed home to prepare the supper meal. After the evening meal and when the dishes had been cleaned Sister Carrie spent the remaining hours either sewing or shelling beans until the light disappeared. At which time, the family gathered for evening prayer as the final act of the day.

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D ole Decon.--Decon Eugene at eighty-three years still breaks his ground with mule and plow. He begins his day at 5:30 A.M. and ends when there is just no more light to work by. The decon has raised eleven head of children, all of whom are away in New York. He and his wife live close to their land, only when tragedy becons are they away. In